



Together with

ANNUAL REPORT 2025/2026



Derby City Council

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INTRODUCTION

Building a Derby to be proud of remains at the heart of everything we do. Despite continued financial pressures, we have stayed focused on protecting essential services, supporting those who need us most, and investing in the city's future.

We are pleased to report that for the first time in a number of years, we have been able to set a balanced budget over the medium term. We have also produced a balanced outturn position for the year.

Over the past year, our Children's Services were rated Outstanding for second time by Ofsted. We have also supported thousands of households through the Household Support Fund and launched our No Place for Hate campaign, working with partners to strengthen communities and improve everyday life for residents.

We have also continued to modernise services and improve value for money. Simplifying paperless Council Tax billing and enhancing our award-winning AI assistant, Darcie, has made services easier to access while improving efficiency.

Through our Climate Change Action Plan, we have continued progress towards net zero by 2035. This includes delivering weekly food waste collections by the Government's deadline, despite wider national challenges, alongside expanding rewilding at Allestree Park.

Close to 2,000 jobs have been created and safeguarded and £19.3m secured for the city in private sector inward investment, supported by the UKSPF funded Invest in Derby programme. We have also continued to build skills and aspirations for young people through our Derby Promise.

Derby continues to grow as a vibrant city for culture and events. Vaillant Live and the refurbished Market Hall have welcomed thousands of visitors in their first year, while Derby LIVE has delivered a packed

programme across the city, supporting the local economy. We are also continuing to build our city centre living offer.

None of this would be possible without strong partnership working and the dedication of our brilliant workforce. This report highlights these achievements and many more, showing what we can achieve when we work together to build a city to be proud of, now and for the future.



Sam Dennis
Chief Executive of
Derby City Council

This report outlines the progress made by the Council towards supporting and improving the lives of our city's residents and their children. Over the last year we have moved to a position of more financial stability, seen the opening of flagship new venues that are bringing vibrancy to our city centre, and continued to embrace innovation with our continuing AI programme.

We have long called ourselves Team Derby for very good reason. We are at our best when we are working with our partners. This year it has been especially rewarding to see the Team Derby name adopted by the Government, in recognition of how our way of working will lead to benefits for all in terms of investment and skills development. Our willingness to take the new opportunities on offer to us stands us in good stead as we look towards the coming year.



Councillor Nadine Peatfield
Leader of Derby City Council

2025/26 AT A GLANCE



Green city

APRIL

More than £12m has been invested in Derby's green and grey urban infrastructure, upgrading 25km of roads and 12km of pavements to keep the city moving safely and smoothly.



Vibrant city

MAY

Over 34,500 visitors flocked to the Market Hall on its opening weekend, following the completion of a £35m project to renovate this listed building.



Connected Council

JUNE

Derby City Council rolled out smart messaging, powered by an advanced AI dashboard, to help collect debt more efficiently and ethically.



Green city

JULY

The Reuse Raynesway shop celebrated its permanent opening, giving pre-loved items a new life and selling nearly six tonnes of recycled goods in three months.



Vibrant city

AUGUST

Osnabrück Square officially reopened as part of the Market Hall restoration, with a delegation from Derby's twin city, creating a welcoming space that celebrates our twinning agreement.



Inclusive city

SEPTEMBER

Our Youth Justice Service became the first in the country to be rated outstanding across the board under the new framework adopted by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).



Green city

OCTOBER

New planters, pocket parks and Living Roof bus shelters have been installed across the city, creating more welcoming streets, boosting habitats for pollinators and enhancing Derby's biodiversity.



City of Growth

NOVEMBER

The Council's new Skills Centre at Friar Gate Studios opened its doors, offering practical training and tailored support to help young people and families with special educational needs and/or disabilities to thrive.



Vibrant city

DECEMBER

Thousands enjoyed the city's seasonal offer including the ice rink, Nordic Bar and beautifully decorated Market Hall.



Green city

JANUARY

More than 5,000 people downloaded the new Ride App, which brings public transport operators across the East Midlands together in a single planning and ticketing app to make sustainable travel easier.



City of Growth

FEBRUARY

Construction of the latest phase of Our City, Our River gathered pace, with the latest package of flood defences set to provide stronger protection for homes and businesses and unlock new green space and opportunities for regeneration.



Inclusive city

MARCH

Over 100 organisations have signed up to the Council's city-wide campaign, sending a clear message that abuse, harassment, bullying and hate towards Councillors, staff and communities will not be tolerated.

2025/26 PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Over the last year, through working with our partners, we:

- Issued a total of 59.4% of new Education, Health and Care Plans within 20 weeks, better than our target of 50.3%.
- Enabled 87% of adults with learning disabilities to live in their own homes or with family, above our target of 85%. Supporting people to live independently in their own home is one of the key aims set out in the Adult Social Care Stronger Together Strategy, and a priority area for improvement.
- Filled a total of 81 job vacancies and created and safeguarded 1,951 jobs following business and organisation support provided by Derby City Council.
- Improved a total of 319 dwellings and shared houses to meet the decent homes standard, exceeding our target of 250.
- Successfully developed re-use provisions within waste services, (e.g. re-use shop, upcycling and repairs), with almost 15 tonnes of reuseable items being sold and 3 tonnes of paint shared with the public for re-use.
- Developed the Local Visitor Economy Partnership Destination Management Plan, in partnership with East Midlands Combined County Authority and other organisations, alongside the Destination Derby Board action plans.
- Continued to realise the city's ambitions by leading and supporting the delivery of major regeneration projects, collaborating with public and private sector agencies. Work is underway on many major projects including phase 3 of Becketwell, Guildhall and Derby Theatre, Castleward and the Market Place.
- Continued to deliver Derby City Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan, with positive engagement across colleague networks, including a new group focused on neurodiversity.
- Delivered 100% of 2025/26 savings through our Delivery Board which focuses on asset rationalisation, efficiency and innovation, digital transformation through AI, and demand, insight and prevention.
- Delivered a balanced budget over the medium term and improved the balance of the General Fund Reserve to the recommended level determined by the Chief Finance Officer.

Delivering our Council Delivery Plan 2025/26

90%

of actions were assessed as 'on track' or 'completed'

60%

of priority measures achieved target

88%

of priority projects were assessed as either 'green' or 'amber/green'

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR DERBY



INCLUSIVE CITY

People at the heart of everything we do

Building an inclusive city means working with our communities to ensure no one is left behind, especially during financial challenges. Over the past year, we focused on delivering help where it is needed most and opening up opportunities so every resident feels supported.

Protecting households from financial hardship remains at the core of this work. Through the Household Support Fund, we helped more than 16,860 Derby households by providing over a million free meals to children during school holidays. Financial support was extended through food and energy vouchers, alongside funding for over 40 Warm Welcome Hubs across the city.

The Council also progressed structural changes to ease financial pressures. We asked for views on our proposals for more people on the lowest incomes get help with their Council Tax bills. A more generous Council Tax Support scheme has been approved, designed to increase financial help for families who need it most.

Support for young people remains central. For low-income families, school holidays bring significant pressure around food and childcare costs, making the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme vital. The scheme welcomed more than 5,000 children, working with 47 local providers to supply healthy meals and activities.

Providing safety and stability for vulnerable children and young people remains a critical priority. This year, our Children Services earned a second consecutive 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted and our Youth Justice Service was rated as 'Outstanding' across the board by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP), the first in the country to do so under the new HMIP framework. It was also the first to be rated outstanding for its work to support victims of crime by young people.

A regional collaboration led by the Council continued to go from strength to strength. Since its launch in 2024, Foster for East Midlands Councils has demonstrated effective collaboration across Derby City, Derbyshire, Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Councils. Working in partnership, the programme has generated nearly 2,600 enquiries, progressed over 200 applications, and secured up to 73 new fostering households across the region.

Independent feedback from council tenants showed continued high satisfaction with landlord services, with residents reporting positive experiences of fairness, respect, communication and overall service quality. Satisfaction with complaints handling also improved during the year, reflecting our continued focus on listening to residents and using feedback to improve services.

Creating an inclusive city also means ensuring everyone feels safe, respected, and able to participate in community life without fear of discrimination or abuse. Following our commitment in September 2025 to tackle hate in all its forms, we launched our No Place for Hate campaign to challenge discriminatory behaviours. More than 100 organisations across Derby have signed the No Place for Hate pledge, committing to practical action to promote inclusion.

Children Services rated outstanding in all areas in the second Ofsted inspection, improving on the first assessment in 2022.

We placed 63% of children in care within 20 miles of their original address, and 45% within a Council fostering service, higher than previous years.

Everyone Active, which manages Moorways Sports Village, named us Local Authority of the Year at their Champions Awards in February.



GREEN CITY

Promoting a sustainable Derby

Over the past year, we have taken real steps to reduce our impact on the environment and find ways to enhance it.

We have continued to deliver on our Climate Change Action Plan, which outlines what we need to do to reach our goal of becoming net zero by 2035.

Key achievements under the plan include:

- Supporting over 300 households to reduce energy bills, with annual carbon emissions reduced by 174.3 tonnes through our Home Energy Advice Service, delivered in partnership with energy charities.
- Expanding wetland, woodland, and meadow habitats at Allestree Park, recognised as the UK's largest community rewilding project.
- Completing design work to nearly double our hydroelectric plant's annual energy capture to 850 MWh, with installations set for summer 2026.

We successfully launched weekly food waste collections for residents on 31 March 2026, meeting the Government's Simpler Recycling deadline despite national challenges affecting many local authorities. We emptied over 90% of household caddies in the first three weeks, diverting 328 tonnes of food waste to be converted into renewable energy and fertiliser.

We opened the permanent Reuse Raynesway Shop in August 2025, expanding opportunities for residents to donate, buy and give items a second life while supporting waste reduction across the city. This hugely successful project has seen almost 15 tonnes of reusable items saved from landfill and sold to give them a new lease of life.

Work on the Derby Riverside phase of Our City, Our River, which is bolstering the city's flood defences, made good progress this year.

Our Mobility Programme aims to reduce pollution and congestion by improving transport choices. In the last year the programme has delivered:

- Major highway and junction upgrades along Victoria Street, Albert Street, Duffield Road, and the Five Lamps area to enhance efficiency, public transport, cycling, and walking.
- Mobility hubs in Chaddesden and Mackworth featuring EV charging, a car club vehicle, secure cycle parking, and public seating.
- A green city centre makeover with new planters featuring integrated seating to enhance visitor experience and biodiversity.

Six of our fantastic parks retained their Green Flag Award status for their high standards and excellence. An additional seven sites maintained by dedicated community groups and volunteers received the Green Flag Community Award, with Derby Arboretum awarded Green Heritage Site Accreditation by Historic England, for the fifth time.

Over 2,000 new trees were planted across Derby in to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Our Street Cleansing Team introduced a new fully electric street sweeper, keeping the city centre tidy and accessible.

15 new Living Pillars were installed across the city centre, bringing nature into urban spaces.



A CITY OF GROWTH

Creating opportunities

Over the last 12 months, we have continued to work collaboratively to attract investment, create opportunities, revitalise our spaces and build a city to be proud of.

Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA), our Vacant to Vibrant scheme is helping to bring empty city centre shops back to life. In March 2026 the first to open was Craftcore, the city's first public-access ceramics studio, run by Derby arts and culture charity Artcore. Ten businesses in total have received funding from the £500,000 pot, with more premises due to open in the first quarter of 2026/27.

This year saw the completion of work in St James's Street, supported by the Future High Streets Fund. This £10 million public-private partnership saw the disused Tramshed converted into Grade A office space, as part of a long-term vision to introduce housing, greenery, and independent cafes.

Castleward Urban Village continued to evolve with planning permission granted for phase 5 of project, which will deliver 167 homes with 30% listed as affordable. Building affordable housing for social rent has been a priority with new quality, energy-efficient homes delivered on previously vacant and underused sites, and work starting on new sites including Crompton Street and Oaklands Avenue.

In March 2026, the Derby Promise hosted its inaugural Employer Summit at Pride Park Stadium, successfully connecting local young people with leading employers, building on our commitment to ensure all our young people are ready for work.

Other key achievements this year include:

- Opening our new Skills Centre at Friar Gate Studios in November 2025, offering practical training and tailored support to help young people and families with special educational needs and disability (SEND) to thrive, build confidence, and gain independence.
- Creating and safeguarding nearly 2,000 jobs through our Council-led business support networks.
- Using our UKSPF-funded Invest in Derby programme to secure £19.3m inward investment, strengthening the local economy.

Looking ahead, the Team Derby partnership, which brings together local leaders, businesses, government, and the University of Derby, will build on this momentum to position the city as a national model for innovation across key sectors.

Six new affordable and sustainable homes on the site of a former day centre in Mackworth were completed.

Derby Promise delivered a calendar of events including Dream Fest, the Festival of Ideas and the Festival of Sport.

114 private sector empty homes were returned into occupation or demolished.



Photo © Robert Day

VIBRANT CITY

Culture and diversity at its heart

It has been an exciting period of transformation for Derby as we continue to bring our vision of a vibrant cultural city to life, creating spaces where community and creativity thrive.

A major highlight has been the successful launch of Vaillant Live in April 2025. In its first 12 months, this state-of-the-art venue hosted more than 75 events and welcomed nearly 78,000 visitors, establishing itself at the heart of Derby's entertainment scene.

The venue won a Special Recognition Award at the East Midlands Property Dinner, awarded just three times in the past 25 years.

The historic Derby Market Hall reopened in May 2025 following a meticulous restoration, and now regularly attracts crowds to a varied programme of live music, themed markets, and creative workshops. It connects seamlessly to Osnabruck Square, which opened in August 2025. Now revitalised and landscaped, this fully accessible green square offers a flexible space for events and outdoor café seating.

The completed Eastern Gateway development also enhances the entrance to the city from Derby bus station, creating a more welcoming arrival. Delivered by Derbion and part-funded by the Council through the Future High Streets Fund, it features a new urban garden, a vibrant mural, and an inclusive play area for families.

To ensure our arts scene continues to grow, we partnered with local stakeholders to open the Chapel Street Arts Centre. This guarantees that the building formerly occupied by Deda remains a vital cultural asset, with our Derby LIVE team delivering a diverse programme of concerts, dance classes, and theatre performances.

Over the past year, Derby LIVE has supported hundreds of events across the city, including:

- Saint George's Day: Family-friendly entertainment across the city centre.
- The Darley Park Weekender: A three-day music extravaganza featuring Bananarama, Heather Small, East 17, and Sinfonia Viva.
- The return of Derby Festé, a celebration of circus, dance, and interactive theatre, featuring international artists alongside the Derby Festé Fringe.
- Festive Derby 2025: Seasonal highlights including the Cathedral Quarter Ice Rink and Nordic Bar, delivered in partnership with local businesses to support the city economy.
- Dick Whittington - the Derby Arena pantomime in partnership with Little Wolf Entertainment, enjoyed by over 36,000 people and nominated for two UK Pantomime Awards.

Purple Flag accreditation retained for 12th year in a row, for managing the evening and night-time economy.

More than 1,200 people enjoyed the Outdoor Theatre and Cinema Season at Markeaton Park Craft Village.

Derby LIVE was voted Business of the Year by the public in the regional Lots for Tots awards.



CONNECTED COUNCIL

Efficient, integrated and accessible services

We have continued to build a more connected and modern organisation, using technology to make services easier to access, more efficient, and better value for money.

Our pioneering use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has won national awards, demonstrating to the wider public sector how technology can improve services while keeping a firm focus on residents' needs.

In May 2025, our digital helper Darcie received a major generative AI upgrade. This allowed Darcie to understand queries more accurately and provide more natural answers. It also enabled residents to ask questions about Adult Social Care for the first time.

The original business case anticipated that our digital helpers would resolve 21% of enquiries. Performance has far surpassed this, with Darcie now handling over half of all contacts directly. This has cut phone queues and freed staff to focus on complex cases where they can provide the most support. Darcie is available 24/7 in English and nine community languages, from Arabic to Urdu, across both web and phone channels.

While Darcie supports residents, a secure internal AI assistant called Perrie has been introduced to work behind the scenes, helping staff with research, drafting documents and analysing information. By letting AI handle simple, repetitive tasks, staff now have more time to focus on the residents who need the most help.

Beyond operational support for staff, we have also transformed our approach to managing income and preventing arrears for residents and businesses.

A new income management messaging service was introduced, driven by an AI-powered dashboard that connects information from across Council systems. By identifying where support may be needed, the service helps the Council collect income fairly and ethically while protecting funding for vital local services. Timely reminders help residents and businesses stay on top of payments, get help earlier and avoid costly recovery action.

Following customer feedback, the paperless billing process was simplified, allowing residents to sign up without creating a separate online account. This makes services easier to use while reducing printing and postage costs.

We have also continued to work in partnership, through our City Partnership Board and regionally with the East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA).

Recognised by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) for work to keep residents' and customers' data safe.

Over 7,000 residents took part in the 'One Derbyshire, Two Councils' survey about the options for Local Government Reorganisation.

The only local authority Highways service in the region to be rated green for best practice by the Government.



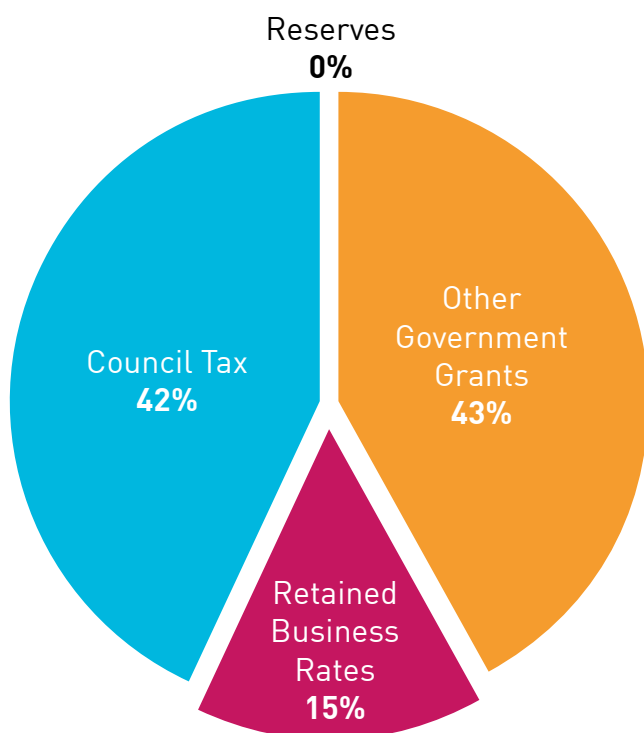
USE OF RESOURCES

The Council underpins delivery of our Council Plan priorities by aligning resources through our Medium Term Financial Plan. We are proud that despite significant financial pressures, the Council has delivered a balanced budget outturn with a contribution to reserves to support pressures emerging in the following year.

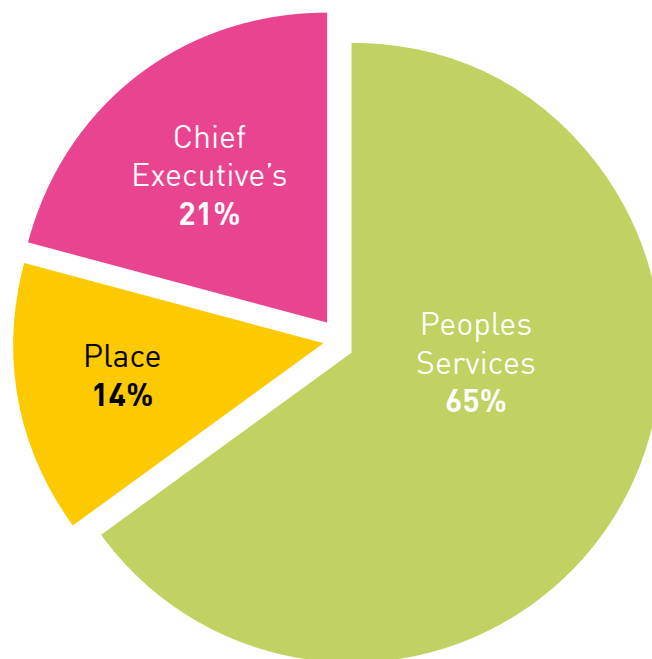
By successfully maintaining its financial resilience the Council has not drawn down the Budget Risk reserve to balance the budget and instead, accomplished a contribution to reserves to meet future financial uncertainties – see below:

Reserve	£m	Narrative
Resource and Delivery Fund Reserve	(2.000)	To support the delivery of Council priorities
PFI Exit Costs Reserve	(1.316)	To fund the costs of future PFI Exits
Budget Risk Reserve	(0.750)	To fund social care liability of residential placements commissioned and paid for by health during COVID19 pandemic.
Total transfer	(4.066)	

MTFP Funding 2025/26



Net Expenditure by Directorate 2025/26



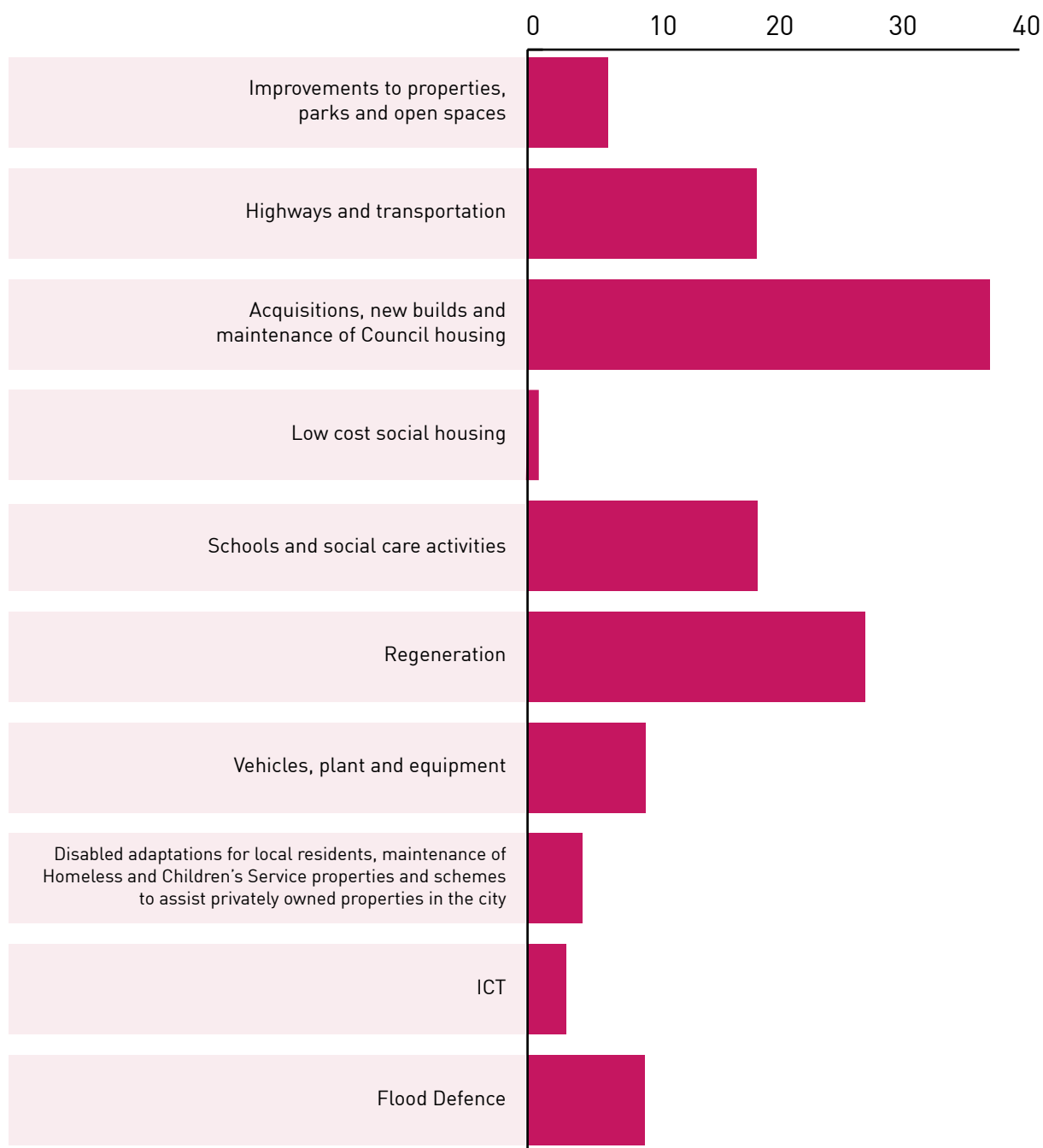


CAPITAL SPENDING

During 2025/26, the Council has spent £135.443m on its ambitious capital programme with elements of the programme being rephased into future years to align with improved project timelines with no reduction in project scope. As a city we have worked to deliver our services within the resources that we have available.

Alongside our day-to-day costs, the Council spends money on capital assets such as buildings, roads, major maintenance, vehicles and ICT.

Major areas of Capital Spend in 2025/26 £m





CITY OF DERBY

ASSURANCE

As a public service, we have governance arrangements in place to assure the delivery of our services and ensure value for money for residents. We use a range of tools, including risk and performance management, to help us deliver our Council Plan priorities and manage our budgets.

Performance Management

To underpin our Council Plan, we have an annual Delivery Plan which includes specific actions, targets and measures of success.

The Council monitors the Delivery Plan and key performance measures within the Council's performance system (PARS). This helps us to review progress in achieving outcomes in the Council Plan and how services are performing compared to peers.

We also monitor budgets on a regular basis with regular oversight by budget managers and directors.

Performance and finance information is reported quarterly to Cabinet, Corporate Leadership Team and Executive Scrutiny Board.

Corporate Performance Management is driven through a Performance Board with regular monitoring of a corporate health dashboard, including deep dive activity and a focus on inspection readiness. There are also targeted Service Improvement Boards, aided by performance, improvement and quality assurance frameworks.

Risk Management

Risk is an inevitable part of service delivery for all organisations. A robust and embedded risk management framework aids effective and informed decision making, by identifying and managing risks. It is essential that for significant organisational risks, or strategic risks, that we understand the effectiveness of our controls in the desired treatment of the risk – how assured are we that risks are accurately identified, in a timely way, and are being well-managed?

Our Strategic Risk Register is reported to Cabinet every quarter, with the Audit and Governance Committee receiving six monthly updates on assurance activities relating to our risks. Over the last year we have collaborated with Councillors and Officers to continue to embed our Risk Management Strategy and supporting Handbook.

Our Corporate Risk Management Group provides advice and guidance on risks as both threats and opportunities, supporting senior leaders in the identification, management and assurance of risk.

For more information on our performance and strategic risks, please refer to our quarterly performance monitoring reports considered by Cabinet, with risk management framework assurance reports presented to our Audit and Governance Committee every six months, also available.

Local authorities are required to publish an Annual Governance Statement (AGS) each year. The AGS reports publicly on an authority's compliance with good governance principles. The latest statement can be found on our website.



**LOOKING AHEAD TO
2026/27 AND BEYOND**

The Council cannot achieve our aspirations for the city without the vital support of its communities and partners. Our Council Plan outlines the role that everyone can play in fulfilling our huge ambitions – together we’re building a Derby to be proud of.

The Council Plan sits alongside our Medium-Term Financial Strategy, setting out how we are going to use our resources to achieve outcomes for the city. Our Delivery Plan for 2026/27 was approved by Council Cabinet in June 2026. We will monitor progress against priorities and must do’s at least every three months, through performance reports presented to Council Cabinet.

As we look ahead, the landscape for public services is changing. The Government’s devolution agenda has significant implications for Derby City Council and the other nine councils across Derbyshire.

We are expecting a decision by Government in July 2026 which will set out what the new unitary authorities in Derbyshire will look like.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) presents challenges and opportunities for Derby City Council as we plan and manage transition towards a new shadow authority with elections taking place in May 2027. Whilst LGR is a driver for change, we remain committed to delivering our Council Plan 2025-28 priorities and continuing to improve outcomes for our communities.

OUR THEMES ARE...

INCLUSIVE CITY

Putting people at the heart of everything we do

GREEN CITY

Promoting a sustainable Derby for future generations

CITY OF GROWTH

Creating a modern city, with jobs, skills and homes for the future

VIBRANT CITY

Reimagining our city with culture and diversity at its heart

CONNECTED COUNCIL

Collaborating to deliver efficient, integrated and accessible services



We can give you this information in any other way, style or language that will help you access it. Please contact us on **01332 640767** or **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ, ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਇਸ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਇੱਥੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: **01332 640767** ਜਾਂ **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Polish

Aby ułatwić Państwu dostęp do tych informacji, możemy je Państwu przekazać w innym formacie, stylu lub języku. Prosimy o kontakt: **01332 640767** lub **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Slovak

Túto informáciu vám môžeme poskytnúť iným spôsobom, štýlom alebo v inom jazyku, ktorý vám pomôže k jej sprístupneniu. Prosím, kontaktujte nás na tel. č.: **01332 640767** alebo na stránke **derby.gov.uk/signing-service**

Urdu

یہ معلومات ہم آپ کو کسی دیگر ایسے طریقے، انداز اور زبان میں مہیا کر سکتے ہیں جو اس تک رسائی میں آپ کی مدد کرے۔ براہ کرم **01332 640767** یا **derby.gov.uk/signing-service** پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں



Derby City Council

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